



"The Kinkare Committee"  
Our brave Treasure's opinion

**Kinkare**..... *Caring for relative carers and those denied access*

# MONTHLY NEWS



Kinkare Founders  
Maree, Danni, Miriam

Edition:  
August 2010

[www.kinkare.com.au](http://www.kinkare.com.au)



## Editorial

Hello Everyone,

This last month has been extremely busy, especially with all the background events surrounding the two Bills before Parliament about recognizing grandparents raising grandchildren as Carers. Again, there **was very little notice given** and it through us all into disarray. An article follows.

This will be a **major** step forward for **all of us**, not just those raising, as all grandparents are also going to be recognized with a **Grandparents Day**. Again, this is mentioned in an article following.

We have to **commend the State Government** for its initiatives concerning grandparents.

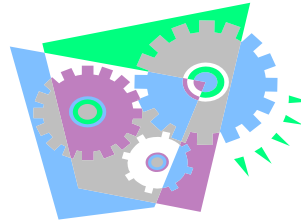
Recognizing grandparents who are primary carers has not come without some hiccoughs. We still need you to **contact your local State member** and make sure your voice is heard. Included, or attached, is the background info. Please contact me if you have not received it.

We had a lovely **get together at the Tavern** last month, but I have to apologize for some people not getting notice in time. The newsletter was sent on time, but it seems the Postal system had a glitch and RSVPs were not received quickly. I therefore chose another date thinking there was little interest in the first one. My sincerest apologies. We did all enjoy it though, and next time I will make sure enough notice is given to accommodate the postal service.

Another couple of **letters from readers** this month! This is the way our newsletter can best serve all our grandparents so please keep them coming.

I am only too happy to publish as many as I can fit in. **I do not need to publish your names and can help you make sure you do not identify yourself.**

Happy reading,  
Maree



## COGs Council of Grandparents

The Council has been very busy over the last few months. They have been exciting times for grandparents and finally the State Government is publicly acknowledging the great input grandparents make to the lives of their grandchildren.

Previously I have outlined the consultative role we now play and Maree has informed you about the steps being taken to recognize those who raise grandchildren full time as Carers.

The next two important issues we face are the possibility of a Congress towards the end of the year and Grandparents Day.

On both of these issues, we need your input to make them meaningful and relevant.

Grandparents Day will possibly come first as October has been thrown around as a possible time. That is just around the corner. Of course, at this stage, there has been absolutely no mention of any funding as the date is a long way from being set in concrete.

It will, however, be on a Sunday just like Mother's and Father's Days. The Council is considering a family type activity as would be appropriate for the other Days. We need you to advise us on the types of activities you would like to see and the venues for these activities.

We also need an indication of the support you would give to any planned events.

The Congress is currently planned for November 18th and 19th. This Congress will probably be held at the same venue as previous State Congresses, the Merthyr Centre in Brisbane.

Again, we are waiting on confirmation of funding before we can make definite arrangements. However, as the time is fast approaching, we want to start alerting possible guest speakers of our agenda.

Some suggestions have already been made, e.g. coping with aggressive parents, policies that the new Federal Gov may have for grandparents, addressing Family Law issues etc. and we look forward to more from you.

Please email or phone Maree and she will pass your ideas on to Tracey Douglas.

K  
i  
n  
k  
a  
r  
e



## Grandparents Day

I have already been contacted by grandparents asking if their grandchildren are able to participate. The answer is a resounding YES!!!

I have also been asked if all activities will be in Brisbane or will there be any in regional areas. The answer to that one is that we don't even know when it might happen. So no-one is able, as yet, to plan activities

This means that **I will not be able to give much notice of these events so please keep watching the newsletter for announcements.**

Given the short time frame, if the day is to go ahead this year, there will be smaller events this time around, but you can look forward to a much greater Day next year.

The **State Government has to be commended on this** and, in particular, **Minister of Child Safety Phil Reeves MP**. I have been reliably told he has been the instigator of the day. Certainly, he did bring it up at the very first meeting that he and Cogs had.

Please also bear in mind that this day is not specific to any particular grandparents, but instead is meant to celebrate the important role that **ALL** grandparents play in the lives of our children.

It is very hard for grandparents who are **denied access to grandchildren** to participate in the same sort of activities that those with close relationships with their grandchildren can.

I will be pointing this out to organizations when the planning of events starts. In an ideal world all grandparents will have events that relate to their situation.

Despite the short notice, the difficulties and the other obstacles we will have to overcome, I am appealing to you all to join together and make this Day one to remember.

**A big show of numbers on the Day will help prove to "the powers that be" that grandparents have to be factored into laws, policies and everything else that they address.**

Another current movement to make this a reality is the possibility that our State Government will recognize grandparents raising grandchildren as Carers.

## Report From Joint Carers Advisory Committee and Council of Grandparents

This meeting started out on what many members of Cogs thought to be a sorry note with **the spokeswoman from the Carers Advisory Committee saying they opposed the legislation making us part of their council.**

However, on listening to her reasons, I had to agree with what she was saying.

She believed that we should have a Council of our own, and I firmly believe that myself. Our issues are very different from theirs and need the special attention that can only be provided by a different Council. Rosemary Menkens Bill provides for this. Another point she raised is that she felt that **inclusion of different carers would "water down" their position.** Again I **agree with her** as we too, have worked long and hard for our rights and I am personally disappointed that we could be thought to be "just another carer".

Still, I believe that if this legislation goes ahead, as the public servants there seemed determined to achieve, **our two organizations are on the same wave length** and could work well together.

**Tony Townsend, from OPSO and National Seniors,** started by outlining our position regarding two main issues.

One being the oversight of other relative carers, such as great Aunts and Uncles, and the second being the extremely important issue of defining grandparent carers as only those who have **decision making powers** for the grandchildren.

The public servants at the meeting seemed only willing to put these suggestions into the **explanatory notes** surrounding the legislation. I have no confidence that many agencies will even read these notes and certainly would have good reason to point to the black and white legislation and say a particular group of grandparents, their policy impacted on, did not fall within the confines of the Act.

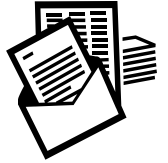
To me, this issue brought **support from members of the Carers Advisory Committee.** One member even stated that she had been a carer for many years but through her profession had come across many grandparent carers and wondered if she could have met the difficulties that they had to face.

**Minister Anastacia Palaszczuk,** Dept of Disabilities who administers the Carers Act, was present for the beginning of the meeting and promised all issues we had raised would be noted. Again, I ask you to **write to your local State member** and make your voice heard so that we can generate healthy debate on this issue in parliament. It is currently set for discussion in this sitting of the house.

In our personal page I have attempted to explain the make up and roles of some of the bodies you may not have heard about before.



# We Should Write a Book!



This is the old "Our Personal Page". It is very important that readers send in their stories to be published on this page to inform others in the community just how different our lives are. This page may also contain comments on calls, or answers to queries raised from time to time.

For the purposes of this page, second generation carers or those denied access will be referred to as "grandparents" and those who rightfully should be raising the children will be referred to as "parents". In some cases the carers may be great aunts or uncles, step grandparents or even great-grandparents etc. This helps to keep the roles of all concerned clear. Similarly, all children will be referred to as "grandchildren". All stories will be edited to protect the identification of anyone involved and in keeping with available space. Accompanying illustrations are from the public domain and are not meant to reflect any party concerned.

**All letters are the opinions of the writers not necessarily ours.**

Dear Maree,

As a parallel to the stupidity of the courts, let me give an instance of the Department of Lunacy (sorry, it's called Child Safety now) and a decision made by a Manager, Team Leader and Child Safety Officer.

A preschool boy was removed from a mother and placed with a grandmother because of the mother's continued substance abuse and general neglect and risk of the child.

In case management planning, the mother was to be allowed to take the child to her residence for overnight stays of up to 48 hours. Given that a problem was the substance abuse, the department obtained an "undertaking from the mother" that she would not indulge in her recreational drug use while the child was in her care.

Oh, come on!! They are turning a blind eye to the mother's **illegal** activities providing she does not use in the presence of her child!! Do they know or understand **anything** about addicts? All it takes is for **one** friend to drop in on the mother and, bingo, they are lighting/shooting up. Forgotten is the "undertaking" to the department.

Meanwhile, this grandmother has to undergo rigorous police checks to gain a Blue Card to show that she is a decent, law-abiding person, fit to care for a child. Now if this grandmother used marijuana to "ease pain" or "cope with asthma" (claims from some who use it) and it showed on her record, she would not be entrusted with the care of the child. Let me clarify, this grandmother **does not use** illegal drugs. I have used this simply as an example.

Yet because the addict is the "natural parent" unsupervised contact is allowable and even pushed hard by the department. If the parent is under the influence of drugs when she calls to collect the child and the grandparent refuses to hand him over, poor gran faces the wrath of the department for not carrying out their instructions.

This is just one example and is part of the reason why I have **no respect whatsoever** for this department, its regulations, its policies and its Acts.

Also, don't think that they follow their own rules strictly. They follow what they choose at any particular time, often ignoring strict guidelines and The Protection of Children Act.

## The Carers Debate

**I am hoping this column will serve to clarify some of my statements that were not as clear as I thought.**

I have had feedback from some that they were not sure where everyone fitted in and I do tend to assume everyone knows this. My apologies to those concerned.

In 2008 the Carers Act recognised unpaid **carers who give assistance to those who require it with everyday tasks**. It set up an advisory Council and also a Carers Charter. Basically the Council provides advice and recommendations to the Minister, advances the interests of carers and oversees compliance with the charter by other bodies.

The Charter emphasises the importance of the role of carers, makes provision for their complaints to be "given careful consideration", together with their views and needs, makes provision for the need to access responsive and affordable services and includes the special needs of remote and rural carers. (Please forgive my simplification of it all.)

There are currently 10 members of the Council, 4 public servants, 3 carers and 3 representatives of carers. Carers Q'ld is one of the bodies on this Council. (Unfortunately their previous name can confuse people to thinking they are the Council.)

**The Government Amendment Bill** intends to include grandparent carers in this model extending the membership of the council by two, being a grandparent carer and a grandparent representative.

**However, it currently excludes grandparent carers who do not have "decision making powers" for their grandchildren.** This is a very important point which I am trying my best to change.



The opposition Bill places the emphasis on the fact that the **"parents" are not able to care for their children** and provides a way for the interests of grandparent carers to gain input into the provision on services and decisions which impact on them and their grandchildren. It makes provision for decision makers to provide the Advisory Council with enough notice so they can put in a submission to the agency on their decision and requires the agency to consider this submission.

The opposition Bill suggests a **specific Charter for Grandparents**.

I hope this had made it all clearer for everyone. If not, please feel free to call me.

# Laughter is the best Medicine

A woman in a supermarket is following a grandfather and his badly behaved 3 year-old grandson

It's obvious to her that he has his hands full with the child screaming for sweets in the sweet aisle, biscuits in the biscuit aisle and for fruit, cereal and pop in the other aisles.

Meanwhile, grandfather is working his way around, saying in a controlled voice, "Easy, William, we won't be long . . . easy, boy."

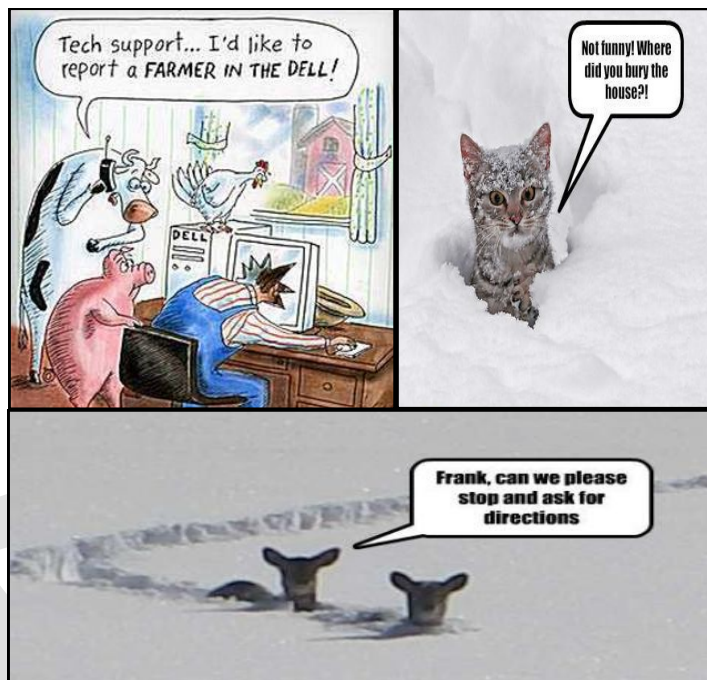
Another outburst, and she hears the grandfather calmly say, "It's okay, William, just a couple more minutes and we'll be out of here. Hang in there, boy."

At the check-out, the little terror is throwing items out of the trolley, and grandfather says again in a controlled voice,

"William, William, relax buddy, don't get upset. We'll be home in five minutes; stay cool, William."

Very impressed, the woman goes outside where the grandfather is loading his groceries and the boy into the car. She said to the elderly gentleman, "It's none of my business, but you were amazing in there. I don't know how you did it. That whole time, you kept your composure, and no matter how loud and disruptive he got, you just calmly kept saying things would be okay. William is very lucky to have you as his grandpa."

"Thanks, lady," said the grandfather, "but I'm William . . . the little b\*\*\*\*'s name is Kevin."



Two 90 year old men, Mike and Joe, have been friends all of their lives. When it's clear that Joe is dying, Mike visits him every day.

One day Mike says, "Joe, we both loved soccer all our lives, and we played soccer on Saturdays together for so many years. Please do me one favour, when you get to Heaven, somehow you must let me know if there's soccer there."

Joe looks up at Mike from his death bed, "Mike, you've been my best friend for many years. If it's at all possible, I'll do this favour for you.

Shortly after that, Joe passes on. At midnight a couple of nights later, Mike is awakened from a sound sleep by a blinding flash of white light and a voice calling out to him, "Mike--Mike."

"Who is it? asks Mike sitting up suddenly. "Who is it?"

"Mike--it's me, Joe." "You're not Joe. Joe just died." "I'm telling you, it's me, Joe," insists the voice.

"Joe! Where are you?" "In heaven", replies Joe. "I have some really good news and a little bad news."

"Tell me the good news first," says Mike. "The good news," Joe says, "is that there's soccer in heaven. Better yet, all of our old friends who died before me are here, too. Better than that, we're all young again. Better still, it's always spring time and it never rains or snows. And best of all, we can play soccer all we want, and we never get tired."

"That's fantastic," says Mike. "It's beyond my wildest dreams! So what's the bad news?"

You're in the team for this Saturday."





# Meeting Notices



## Kinkare Groups:

### Beaudesert:

Place: Beaucare 44 Tina St  
Day/Time: 4th Friday of the month 10:30am  
Contact: Maree ☎ 3287 1664

### Cleveland:

Place: Donald Simpson Ctr, 172 Bloomfield St  
Day/Time: 3rd Friday of the month 10:30am  
Contact: Maged ☎ 3207 7200

### Eagleby:

Place: Eagleby Community Ctr, Cowper Ave  
Day/Time: 2nd Friday of the month 10:30am  
Contact: Maree ☎ 3287 1664 or Danni ☎ 3299 1764

**NEW Inala and  
Goodna united**

### Inala /Goodna:

Place: The Hub, Corsair Ave  
Day/Time: 2nd Tuesday of the month 10:30am  
Contact: Maree ☎ 3287 1664

### Nerang:

Place: Nerang Neighbourhood Ctr, Martens St  
Day/Time: 4th Wednesday of the month 12:30pm  
Contact: Marjie ☎ 5527 3034

## GAGS Inc

Place: Energex House, Cnr Wallace Nth & Tallon St  
Caboolture  
Day/Time: 2nd Wednesday of the month 10:00am  
Contact: Helen ☎ (07) 5498 9333  
✉ gagsinc@hotmail.com

## Western Australia:

### Granpower:

Email: info@granpower.org.au  
Ph 0409 294 231

## South Australia:

### Grandparents for Grand- children SA Inc:

Ph Denise (08) 8410 6642  
Email: denise.gfgsainc@bigpond.com

## Grandparents as Parents

### Sunshine Coast:

Place: Comm. Capital Ctr, Sportsmans Pde, Bokarina  
Day/Time: 2nd Friday 10am-12noon  
Contact: ☎ 5437 9499

## Indigenous G'parent Support Group:

Place: Centacare  
Day/Time: Weekly  
Contact: Tess Rowley ☎ 3252 4371

## North Queensland:

### Cairns and District Grandparents Support Group:

Place: Hambledon House Community Ctr, Edmonton  
Day/Time: 1st Wednesday of the month 9:30am  
Contact: John or Janet ☎ 4055 5161

## Grandparents in need of Support (GINOS)

Contact: Nev ☎ (07) 4723 3520  
✉ trcota@bigpond.net.au

## The Townsville G'parents Social Support Group:

Place: Dan Gleeson Memorial Gardens  
Day/Time: Last Friday of the month 10:30am-12 noon  
Contact: Nev ☎ (07) 4723 3520

## G'parents Raising Grandchildren – Atherton Tablelands:

Place: Family Support House, 38 Mabel St  
Day/Time: 1st Monday of the month 9:30am-11:30am  
Contact: Jane or Kirsty ☎ (07) 4091 3850

## Always room for more!

Please send in details that you would like  
published on this page.

(To ensure publication, send written information  
to Maree as per the footer contact details.)

**Seniors Enquiry Line – 1300 135 500**

This is not just for the old and frail! Ask about the **Time for Grandparents Programme** while you are there.

**Centrelink (Parent or Guardian Line) – 13 61 50**

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

Centrelink social workers know about most of the community organisations in the area, not just money matters.

**Please make an appointment.** It is worth your while.

**Child Support Agency – [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)** The CSA is a

Federal Government organisation which helps support separated parents – and grandparents who are primary carers – with the transfer of payments for the benefit of their (grand)children.

**Community Legal Centres**

The national website is [www.naclc.org.au](http://www.naclc.org.au)

or for Queensland, see [www.qails.org.au](http://www.qails.org.au)

Usually these centres can provide free legal services, short of actually representing you.

**Legal Aid – [www.nla.aust.net.au](http://www.nla.aust.net.au)** (the national website)

and **Legal Aid Queensland – 1300 651 188**

[www.legalaid.qld.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au)

**Family Law Court Australia (Queensland) – 3248 2200**

[www.familycourt.gov.au](http://www.familycourt.gov.au) (national website)

**Parentline – 1300 301 300**

[www.parentline.com.au](http://www.parentline.com.au)

This is for all types of parents and you are not excluded!

**Kids' Help Line – 1800 551 800**

[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

This is for your kids. They often need a place to talk privately and so far I have had only good reports.

**Commission for Children Young People and Child Guardian**

**1800 688 275**

3224 4225 (Queensland office)

[www.ccyepcg.qld.gov.au](http://www.ccyepcg.qld.gov.au)

**Relationships Australia – 1300 364 277**

[www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)

Don't forget to look after yourself and your relationships with other family members and spouse!

**Crisis Care** (Dept Child Safety Queensland after hours)

**1800 177 135**

3235 9999

[www.childsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au)

**Keep a Diary:**

The diary should include day, date and time of any contact and notes regarding the event. This might simply be that you sent a birthday card or email.

For those denied access, there could well come a time when the children ask why you were not there when they were growing up. As adults, they can see that you wanted to be and tried hard to be there for them. For those raising, the day may come that you are accused of stopping their parents from seeing them and the above applies again.

In either situation, the diary may well be helpful if ever the matter does go to a court.

**Ask Questions of any Professional:**

No matter if you are speaking to a lawyer, medical person or a Child Safety Officer, you are entitled to be fully briefed on their role and what they can and can't do for you as well as their qualifications.

Ask legal people how many grandparent cases like yours they have handled and what their success rate is. Ask medical, or similar, people if they are prepared to sign a report that you can give to your solicitor or Child Safety.

Never attend a Child Safety Meeting without someone else with you and make sure you are given a Carer Handbook. In Queensland it is permissible to tape the session as long as you declare your intention.

**Make an appointment for a Centrelink Social Worker:**

If you need to deal with Centrelink, don't just do so over the phone or even the counter. The social workers are much more knowledgeable. Tell them your basic situation at the time of making the appointment to give them time to look into the subject.

**Seek Free Legal Opinion first:**

There are many places where you can get free legal opinion other than Legal Aid. The Community Legal Centres have nothing to gain by misleading you as they are not funded by your wallet.

**Look after YOURSELF!!!**

No matter if you are denied access, raising or somewhere in between, the pressures are huge. Even young grandparents can be worn down by the constant anxiety and frustration.

**Your grandchildren need you to be at your best!**

Make sure you attend your doctor regularly and mention your situation. It is also very important for you to have someone outside the situation to talk freely to.

This is where support groups are at their best.

You can talk to others who understand your concerns and may even be able to tell you how they coped in a similar situation.

You will find there are other very good parents who have had the same thing happen to their family.

**You will find you are not alone.**